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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

MAR 14 1945

Wednesday, April 14, 1943

Subject: "RATIONING AND NUTRITION" Information for Farm Food Distribution Administration officials of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Before the war when Americans were rationed only by their pocketbooks and were free to buy the foods they pleased, the majority of us chose food that did not provide all we needed for health protection. That is why experts believe food rationing may improve our food habits and our health. Some people say we were in a food rut. We ate the same things for breakfast morning after morning because we liked them and not for the food value they gave us. We bought the same cuts of meat week after week for the same reason. But now that we are limited in the amount of many of those foods we were accustomed to eating, we are learning about new foods...our diets are becoming more varied. We are learning that many of the foods we didn't particularly like supply more food value than those we ate regularly. We are also learning that there are alternates for most of the foods ...that is, other foods with about the same food values...and food values are what counts in the long run.

Now that meat, most cheese and canned fish are rationed, homemakers are particularly interested in alternates for these protein foods. They are probably familiar to you by now, but just in case you've forgotten some of them, let's go over them again. On the "off ration" list is chicken and other poultry, fresh fish, eggs, cottage cheese, and other unrationed cheeses, peanuts and peanut butter. While none of these are actually substitutes for meat, they all have protein value as well as vitamins and minerals so necessary to health and stamina. You can prepare them in many ways to add zest to meals. By using them you help to send more meat overseas to our fighting forces. Of course, you'll want to serve

eggs often. In addition to being a good source of protein, eggs are one of the few foods that contains the "sunshine vitamin D" along with one of the B vitamins, riboflavin. Eggs as a main dish or as sandwich fillings with green or yellow vegetables, milk, and fresh fruit make a good unrationed meal for the hardest worker. Eggs are now under a price ceiling and the season for a plentiful supply is at hand. Other alternates for meat that are on the rationed list, but take fewer stamps than beef, pork, or lamb are dried peas, beans and lentils. Soybeans are an excellent source of protein. Bread, both whole grain and white, provides some protein as well as some vitamins and minerals. You can use bread to stretch meat in croquettes, meat loaves, and other meat dishes.

And now for some general tips on buying rationed foods. For good nutrition make point rationed foods fit into planning of well balanced meals. Make yourself familiar with the different classes of foods everyone needs for good health in order to be sure that meals are well balanced. Let's check over the list. Here are the foods needed every day: First, milk....then citrus fruit, tomatoes, or other vitamin-C rich food....third, green and yellow vegetables....fourth, other vegetables and fruits....and fifth, meat or alternate main-dish foods such as eggs, cheese, dried beans or peas....sixth, grain products....and seventh, fats. Keep these in mind when you trade ration stamps for canned, frozen, or dried foods. Don't duplicate when you can buy fresh. Remember that what you eat fresh takes the pressure off processed foods and off your ration book.

Read the labels on canned foods. There you will find quantity, ingredients and often also, quality and suggestions about use. You may learn facts....some unexpected....to guide you in buying. Finding out how many halves of peach or pear in a can, for example, may help in planning servings. Choose the size of can most economical for your use. It's not hard to learn to do quick sums when buying. As a rule, 16 ounces, or 1 fluid pint, or 1 pound, will fill 2 standard measuring

cups....32 ounces, or 1 fluid quart, or 2 pounds, will fill 4 cups.

You may want to make your own table of some equivalents to keep in your purse or in the kitchen. Always buy the quality for your use. You don't need Grade A, or Fancy Fruit to cut up in salad or pie. On the other hand, you may want a high grade to serve "as is" where looks and perfection count.

But buying the food is only a part of your job. Caring for it after you get it home is extremely important in wartime, so food won't go to waste. Be sure to store canned foods where it's dry to prevent rust and spoilage. Food canned in glass store in a dry, dark and cool place. Keep quick-frozen foods solidly frozen until needed. Frozen foods will not keep too long in a mechanical refrigerator, even in the freezing compartment. Once frozen foods thaw, use themdon't try to refreeze them. Probably you know that cooking food too long means great losses in nutritive value. The big loss is in vitamin C and the B vitamin known as thiamine. As a general rule, cook all foods quickly. Since canned vegetables are already cooked they only need to be on the stove long enough to reach the boiling point at the last minute. Frozen vegetables should go in the kettle still solidly frozen not thawed. The blanching and freezing processes break down the tissues so that less time is required for cooking the frozen vegetables than the fresh ones. It is a good idea to read the cooking directions on each package of frozen foods. Stir vegetables only when absolutely necessary. Stirring mixes air into the food and that destroys some of the vitamins. Since cooking water takes up some of the vitamins and minerals, it is good food. Don't discard it. Serve it with the vegetables, if possible, or use it in soup, or gravies, or chill it, and combine it with other vegetable juices to make a nutritious beverage.

Just remember, food rationing does not mean that your family cannot be well fed. It just means a little more planning.

